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THE WORLD'S HOPE.

The whole creation was subjected to vanity in hope, and shall be delivered.—Rom. viii. 19–21

Vol. 29., No. 16. ALMONT, MICH., AUGUST 15, 1911. $1.00 a year

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THAT Paul teaches that God imputes righteousness to those who believe in Christ is admitted by nearly all who read his writings; but some claim that it is a dangerous doctrine, on the ground that it leads people to think that they do not need to become really and personally righteous in order to be fit for the kingdom of God. If it has that effect, it must be dangerous; and it is not uncommon now for preachers and others to say that Paul was mistaken. But it seems safer to think that those who reject the doctrine of imputed righteousness do not understand it, than to think that Paul did not understand the gospel of Christ.

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he gives a clear outline of the gospel plan. In the third chapter, he gives a dark picture of man as a sinner,—by nature, and therefore by practice,—and shows that he cannot be justified—made righteous—by obedience to the law: for all the law can do is to give a knowledge of sin.—Vs. 9–20. He then shows that now—by the gospel—the righteousness of God without the law is manifested (witnessed by the law and the prophets), and that sinners are freely justified by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.—Vs. 21–26. This righteousness of God, or justification, he tells us, is received by faith, and not by obedience to the law, which condemned the sinner, so that no one can boast of himself or of his own righteousness.—Vs. 27–30. (See also Eph. ii. 8–10.) And yet he shows that the law is not made void, but established, by this doctrine of justification by faith.—Ver. 31. This is because faith works by love, and leads to a life of practical righteousness. Though sinners are not saved *by* good works, they are saved *to* good works.

It is worthy of notice that in the Bible the believer in Christ is never counted a sinner—but a saint—however imperfect he is in himself. After speaking to believers as saints, or "the sanctified in Christ Jesus," the apostle exhorts them to overcome their evils; and says he could not speak unto them as unto spirit-

ual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.--See Rom. i. 6, 7; 1. Cor. i. 2; iii. 1-3. Though weak and imperfect in themselves, they are counted "complete in Him."--Col. ii. 10. God has made Christ unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."—1. Cor. i. 30. All that he is, is credited to us.

Paul refers to Abraham as an illustration. "He believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."—Rom. iv. 3. In verse 4 he shows that if salvation were of works, it would not be of grace, but of debt; and then adds: "But to him that worketh not [to earn salvation], but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." As it was of Abraham, so of the believers in Christ;—though imperfect in themselves, they are counted righteous.--See verses 20-25, and v. 1.

Paul shows that David also speaks of the happiness of the man "to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."—Vs. 6-8.

Not to impute sin is to impute righteousness, or to count them holy. We know that neither Abraham nor David was perfect in character; and the same is true of the Christians to and of whom Paul was writing. The fact that their sins are said to be "covered" implies that they are yet sinners in their own nature. When they are made perfect in righteousness, as God is perfect, they will no longer need to be "covered."

It is an important gospel fact that men are said to be justified and reconciled through the death and resurrection of Christ. What sinners need is said to have been done in Him. The ground of a sinner's acceptance with God cannot be his own righteousness, for he has no righteousness. If he knows the gospel, he does not approach God in his own merit, but trusts in the *finished* work of Christ, realizing that He reconciled us and made us righteous by His death, and destroyed death by His resurrection; and that he is "accepted in the Beloved."—Eph. i. 6; See also Rom. v. 10; vi. 10, 23. Some are inclined to ridicule it, but Paul plainly teaches that by Adam's sin all were made sinners, and that by the righteousness of Christ all are made righteous.—Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. Whether we understand it or not, it is clearly revealed that Christ was so vitally related to mankind that his death was on account of our sins, and reconciled us to God, and his resurrection was on account of our justification.--Rom. iv. 25; v. 10. This is what makes his death and resurrection gospel for all sinners.—1. Cor. xv. 1-4. We receive this truth by faith, but faith does not make it true. Faith receives and applies the truth; and while it is true before we believe it, yet until we believe it, our *experience* is the same as if it were not true. The merit is in him, and in what he has done for us, but receiving it by faith, we have peace with God, and rejoice in the hope of his glory.—Rom. v. 1, 2.

What a blessed standing-ground we have. In him we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.—1. Cor. i. 30. God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—2. Cor. v. 21. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."—Ver. 19. Righteousness and reconciliation are inseparable.

Those who know this truth, that our acceptance with God is "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," but according to his mercy which was revealed in Christ Jesus, are not the least likely "to maintain good works."—Titus iii. 4-8. They will not believe that the doctrine of imputed righteousness is dangerous. They know that faith in God's all-abounding and sin-covering grace works by love and leads to obedience. John says: "We love [him] because he first loved us."—1. John iv. 19. And Jesus said: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."—John xiv. 15, R. V. What Christ secured *for* us by his death and resurrection, is applied *to* us when we believe, and then is wrought *in* us by the Spirit and develops good character and works.—Eph. ii. 8-10.

Those who realize their sin and their need of God's covering mercy, are not dead in sin, but are begotten by the Spirit, and come into fellowship with the Lord of life and love. They do not work for him to get life, but because he has given them life. They do not work to gain a place in his family, but because they are in the family. The fruit does not give the tree life, but is produced by the tree because it is alive; and the tree is *known* by its fruit. People do not grow to become members of Christ's body, but once in him, they grow in grace and knowledge; and from Him, their Divine Head, all needed help comes, to enable them to overcome their evil, and grow up to perfection. He that has the hope of victory—of seeing Christ as he is and being like him—purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—1. John iii. 2, 3.

Righteousness is not imputed to encourage sin, nor to set aside the necessity of growing up to personal righteousness. The opposite of this is true. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1. John i. 9. Forgiveness is an instantaneous act of mercy, but cleansing is a process. When it is complete, there will be no more danger of committing sinful acts. The overcoming will then be past, and we will be ready for a place with Christ in his throne.

Meanwhile, we have self to overcome. How much easier to do this, and to climb the hill of life, if we do not carry the burden of guilt and the fear of failure. How discouraged many people often are because they have doubt as to their acceptance with God. They do not realize that God has given them the assurance of eternal life and righteousness in Christ Jesus. They think their eternal life depends upon their perseverance; and if they stumble and fall, as all are liable to do, they are discouraged. They perhaps do not know that all believers now have eternal life, and therefore cannot lose it. They do not realize that "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all

those that be bowed down."—Ps. cxlv. 14.

There are rewards for faithfulness, but life, sonship and a place in God's family, are not of works, but of grace. "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth."—Jas. i. 18. The seed by which we are begotten is incorruptible, and therefore cannot fail.—1. Pet. i. 23–25; John i. 13.

The strong one in an earthly family may fill a place of great usefulness, but the little one, who is just able to talk and walk, and who often takes a fall, is as near and dear to the parent's heart. And its standing in the family does not depend upon its strength and knowledge, but on the fact that it is the child of its parents. It lives, eats, loves and grows because it belongs to the family. And the same is true of the child in the spiritual family.

When sin is not imputed to a man, God counts him dead to sin; and when righteousness is imputed to a man, God counts him alive to Him. Speaking of the Lord Jesus as our Head and the Source of our life, Paul says: "In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God;" and adds: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, though Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. vi. 10, 11. What God has done for us in Christ, we are to count as ours; and though we are counted righteous, because we are to be righteous, we are to strive to be right. Having been baptized into Christ, in accepting him as our covering (Rom. vi. 1–5 and Gal. iii. 27), we are to make it our aim to "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," practically. Rom. xiii. 14. This principle is seen in Colossians iii. 3–5—an apparent contradiction: "Ye are dead, * * mortify [put to death] therefore your members [of the body of sin] which are upon the earth." How can a dead man kill himself? He is first counted dead and alive in Christ,—righteousness imputed,—and then he is to carry the work out practically.

See also verses 9, 10. By the grace of God, we are counted complete in Christ: and because personal perfection is the Lord's purpose concerning us, we are to follow his example, and aim to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."—Col. iv. 12. What we are to be, God already counts us (calling what is begun as though it were complete), and we are to strive to be, and work out our own salvation, for it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure.—Phil. ii. 12, 13. Because we are counted holy, righteousness being imputed to us, we are called upon to be holy in conversation and life. Though counted in Christ when he died for us, and when we believed the truth, yet it is the true purpose of life to win Christ, and be found in him, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iii. 8–14.

The greatness of this high calling can only be realized when it is seen that those who are faithful, and keep Christ's works unto the end, growing up to his perfection, are to be a royal priesthood, and be coworkers with him in blessing the world of mankind.

In the atoning sacrifice "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."—2. Cor. v. 19. What was thus done in him, is applied by the Spirit of truth, through faith and obedience—to the church first, and through them to the world afterward. The righteousness is first imputed, and later imparted, when we shall be like Christ.

BY observing the date, with the name, on your wrapper or paper, you may know your standing in our subscription book. "Mar. 11," "June 11," "Sep. 11," or "Dec. 11," shows the month to the end of which you have paid, or have been credited. A star (*) with the figures, as "Dec. 11*" shows that you have not paid, but that we have heard from you, and that you have promised to pay. Those who are unable to pay, and have asked for the paper free, are credited as if they had paid. If the date is in the past, or "**Dec.** 10," it calls for renewal. We want to hear also from all our free readers. If we make mistakes, (to which editors, as well as others, are liable,) please notify us at once and we will gladly correct them.

NOTES ON SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS.

Daniel and His Companions.—Dan. i. 8-20.

(Lesson for Sept. 10.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth."—Rom. xiv. 21.

INTRODUCTION.—Daniel, born in Jerusalem, is supposed to have been fourteen years old when he was taken to Babylon. He is brought before us as a learned man, a wise statesman, a great prophet, and a noble character. The Book of Daniel is both historical and prophetical, mainly the latter. Some still hold that it is real history and prophecy, but some regard it is as fiction. Ezekiel refers to Daniel twice (xiv. 14; xxxviii. 3), which seems proof of his real personality; and our Lord refers to him as a prophet.—Matt. xxiv. 15.

I. VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.—Vs. 8–15. This is designed as a Temperance Lesson. Among the captives in Babylon, we see Daniel and his three companions. Their names were all compounded with the name of God. Daniel means "God is my judge;" Hananiah, "God is gracious;" Mishael, "This is as God;" and Azariah, "God is a helper." The king had their names changed, and compounded with those of royalty or idols. They were called Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were chosen to be trained as trusted officers in the king's court; and the king appointed that they should be fed on his food and wine.—Vs. 1–7.

Here was temptation. Wherein was the danger? (1) The diet was probably such as was forbidden to Israel: (2) Its tendency to idolatry—the custom of offering a portion to the heathen gods; and (3) the injury to both body and mind. Daniel, knowing the law, and the bad effects of such diet, determined that he would not be defiled by the use of it; and requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might be excused from its use. The Lord had brought Daniel into favor with this prince; but the prince was afraid to disobey the king.

He thought any other diet might show to their disadvantage, and he might lose his life.

Then Daniel appealed to Melzar—a steward—to be tried for ten days on a diet of pulse and water, and then to be compared with those fed on the king's food. This plan was allowed, and the result was all that could be desired. It showed the success of a diet of beans, peas or grain, without animal food or wine.

II. THE RESULT.—Vs. 16-20. As a result of the test, Melzar took away the king's food, and continued to feed them on pulse. They had the best bodily conditions. Their mental powers were good, and they were successful in their education. Daniel's prophetic power was developed: he had understanding in all visions and dreams. They pleased the king, and were honored with high positions, where they were a great blessing to others. Daniel continued to the first year of Cyrus—the date of the restoration.—Ezra i.

Daniel's example teaches us to do right at all hazard, to "keep the body under." What people eat and drink has much to do with health and comfort. Blood, muscle, nerve and brain are no better than the food from which they are made. And health of body has much to do with mental power. We know that many lives and homes are wrecked by the use of strong drink. We cannot gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles. What is sown must be reaped.

Daniel may be regarded as a type of the overcomer, who has the promise of sitting with Christ in his throne, and sharing in the work of the final restoration.

Daniel's Companions in the Fiery Furnace.

Dan. iii. 13-28.

(Lesson for Sept. 17.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—Heb. xiii. 6.

INTRODUCTION.—After Daniel's promotion to a position of great influence in Babylon, he secured a prominent place for his three companions.—Dan. ii. 48, 49. And they were put to a severe test to see if they were really the servants of God or of the king.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king, had a great golden image erected, and called the officers of all the provinces to come to its dedication.

Then a decree was issued requiring that, at the sound of all kind of music, all the people should fall down and worship the image. The penalty for disobedience was to be cast alive into a fiery furnace.—Vs. 1-7.

This decree was hard on the Jews, whose religion forbade them to worship the image. Probably many bowed, but the three young rulers stood erect,—an act of courage, and showing faithfulness to Jehovah. They were reported to the king, and it was expected that they would suffer the penalty.

I. ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE KING.—Vs. 13-18. The king was very angry, and had the three young rulers brought before him. He questioned them. He could hardly believe it. In the face of such authority and such a penalty it was hardly conceivable to such a king. If they were really defying his authority they must go into the furnace; and he defied any god to deliver them.

The three men answered the king fearlessly. They declared their faith that their God could deliver them from the fire and from him; but, even if He did not protect them, they would not worship his gods nor bow down to his image.

This was a case of stern integrity to the truth—just what is needed in every day life. In various ways people are still called on to worship the golden god; and those who refuse have to pass figuratively, into a fiery furnace. The Lord will have a people who will stand for truth and equity.

II. IN THE FURNACE.—Vs. 19-25. Being coolly defied, the king was furious; and he ordered that the furnace be made ten times hotter than usual. Did he not know that the hotter the fire the quicker the death? The strongest soldiers were chosen to bind the three men, and cast them into the fire. In executing the king's decree, the soldiers themselves were killed by the fire; but the faithful three were unhurt, and the king was surprised to see four in the fire—the fourth being "like a son of the gods."—R. V.

Many times in their fiery trials God's faithful ones have found the presence of the "fourth." "Lo, I am with you always."

III. THE DELIVERANCE.—Vs. 26-28. The king came near the furnace, and in answer to his call, the three men came out of the fire. He called them "servants of the Most High God." And the king's associates came together and saw the men "upon whose bodies the fire had no power,"—no sign of the fire being upon them nor their garments. And the king owned and blessed the God of the faithful, who had sent his angel and delivered them. And he made a decree that no one should speak a word against the God of the Hebrews, who alone could deliver. He also promoted Daniel's three companions.

The Lord does not always spare the natural life of the faithful, but he has promised to be with them in the fire; and they are candidates for promotion in a better kingdom than Babylon.

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"OUR FATHER."

IN these first two words of the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples, we see the thing for which we delight to contend—the Universal Fatherhood of God, and the Universal Brotherhood of Man. Of course, if God is the Father of all men, then all are the sons of God, and therefore brethren.

We know that many Christians do not see this as we do. They think that "*Our* Father" means that he is the Father of Christians only, and there are some things in the word that have given ground for this idea. Our Lord said of certain ones: "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the works of your father ye will do." And Paul said: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And there are other similar Scriptures.

In what sense is the devil the father of wicked men? It must be on account of their low conditions and principles, as he is not the author of their being. But Christians will hardly deny that all men are "the offspring of God." Even the heathen poets, endorsed by Paul, expressed this truth: "For we are also his offspring."—Acts xvii. 28. Yes, Paul endorsed this by saying: "Forasmuch as we *are* the offspring of God, etc.," making this truth the ground of his argument against idol worship. The idea is that, as we have such a high source, and therefore have such great faculties and possibilities, we ought not to worship the things beneath us, or which we have made. Men tend to grow like what they worship, and therefore we ought to worship God, our Father.

What, then, is the difference between the believer and the unbeliever—the converted and the unconverted? This question suggests its own answer: The one has received the truth and come under its uplifting influence, and the

(*Continued on page 233.*)

THE WORLD'S HOPE.

PUBLISHED SEMI-MONTHLY AT

ALMONT, LAPEER COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Entered at the Almont P. O. as Second Class matter

J. H. PATON, - EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Terms of Subscription, Including Postage:

For One Year $1.00
For Six Months 50
To Foreign Subscribers 1.25
Sample to any address ..... Free

All money should be sent to the Editor, and all drafts and money orders made payable to him. Any large amount should be sent by postal order, draft or registered letter. For sums less than one dollar, one-cent or two-cent postage stamps may be sent, when postal notes cannot be obtained.

Address all communications to

J. H. PATON,
ALMONT, LAPEER CO., MICH.

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Union Church on Town line, about three miles south-east of Peck, Friday, Aug. 18, at 7:30 p. m.

Peck, Mich., Aug. 19, at 7:30 p. m. and on Aug. 20, at 10:00 a. m.

Yale, Mich., Aug. 20, at 3:00 and 7:30 p.m.

Detroit, Mich., Aug. 27. All the Detroit friends are invited to the Odd Fellows' Temple, 129–131 Bethune Ave., Corner Brush St., Men's Parlor, First Floor, at 3:00 p. m.

Sept. 3 and 10. Open for special arrangement.

Those in the several localities seeing this please tell others.—EDITOR.

BE STRONG.

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong!
It matters not how deep the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long.
Faint not, fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.—Sel.

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(*Continued from page 247.*)

other has not. But let it be remembered that believing the truth does not *make* it true. That it *is* true is the all-sufficient reason for believing it. And yet, let it be observed, that so long as people do not believe the truth and come under its saving influence, it is practically the same to them as if it were not true.

Will we be understood if we say that in the unbelieving or unregenerate human mind (the state in which men are called the children of the wicked one), the principle of divine sonship is in a latent or dead condition. In that condition there can be no consciousness of the divine relationship, and therefore no experience concerning it. But the principle must exist or it could not be latent, and then be developed. When Paul says: "You hath he quickened who were dead," it implies the existence before the quickening. When the dormant principle is quickened, and the spirit of truth and love becomes the ruling motive, then what Paul says becomes true in our experience: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

If we know the blessed truth that God is our Father, we should also know that all mankind are brethren. John says: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." If the living one is the brother of the dead one, then the dead one is the brother of the living one. The relationship is the same on both sides. The brotherhood is a fact, and is not dependent on the mental condition of the persons. When the truth is realized that all are brothers, it becomes a practical and elevating principle in all the relations of life. It is more than patriotism. It is world-wide in its bearing.

OUR FATHER DECLARED.

IN John i. 18 we read: "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Here three things are stated: (1) the invisibility of God to mortals; (2) the position of the Son—in the Father's bosom; and (3) the work of the Son—to make the Father known.

How emphatically this third truth is against the old idea that the Son came to appease the Father's wrath, and reconcile him to man! This is a dangerous untruth, especially when one desires to know how to be at peace with God. How precious it is to know that the Son came to reveal what always was, and always will be true, that God is our Father, kind, forgiving and loving. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace."

It seems to be a great truth that love is the cause of all that God created. The universe is because God is Love. "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." —Rev. iv. 11. Then God's love did not need to be purchased. Love is the perfection of friendship. God is the Friend of man. He is good. He so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son. The Son is the Father's expression. It seems good to think that he was and is in the bosom of the Father;—that his coming in the flesh was the revelation of the Father's heart in human form. And the text suggests that while he was in the flesh for manifestation, he was still in the bosom of the Father as the fountain of supply. Some may think that he was in the bosom of the Father only after his ascension. But it seems well to think less of place, and more of relation and condition. The Father, being himself invisible, needed the visible manifestation, and the Son was that manifestation, and the link between heaven and earth. John iii. 13 teaches that though he came down from Heaven, he

was still in heaven. Many think of heaven as a place far away: but here heaven seems to be a spiritual state, not so far from us in locality as in condition. As the spiritual nature is developed, we may realize that we too are in heaven while still on earth.

It is good to realize this truth, that God is truly and always our Father and our Friend; that he never was our enemy, and therefore did not need to be reconciled to us: but that we need to be reconciled to him. In other words, we need to have our spiritual nature quickened and developed into harmony with our Father, and the misson of the Son was to declare the Father for the purpose of bringing us into the spiritual condition in which he dwells. He came into our condition in the flesh, that he might take us to his condition in the spirit. He was rich and became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He took our humanity that in and through him we might be made one with God. This at-one-ment was wrought in him, and by him it will be wrought in us.

This is a theme that since we learned it we love to emphasize: that the Son came to declare the Father; not to reconcile him to man; not to appease his wrath, but to reveal his love, and by means of it to appease and destroy man's wrath;—to take away man's enmity by the revelation of the infinite love through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God revealed brings heaven to man or man to heaven. We need to know God. It is not that we should have a theory about him, but an experience. John says: "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."—See 1. John iv. 8, 16. If we love, we have a little idea of what God is. It may not be possible to define fully what love is, but, if it refers to God, we may say that it includes that state of mind which will not be content without pleasing him; and, if it refers to our fellow-beings, it seeks to do them good. Love is the perfection of friendship.

"Blessed be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

THE NINETY AND NINE.

A NEW VERSION.

There was one fair lamb that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold,
But ninety and nine were lost—away—
Far off from the gates of gold—
Away on the mountains wild and bare,
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.

"Lord, I am here, this lamb of Thine—
Am I not enough for Thee?"
But the Shepherd made answer,
"Ninety and Nine
Are still far away from me,
And, although the road be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find each sheep."

But little that ransomed one ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark were the nights that the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that were lost;
Out in the desert He heard their cry—
Sick and helpless and ready to die.

"Lord, whence are those blood drops all the way
That mark out the mountain's track?"
"They are shed for all who have gone astray
Ere the Shepherd can bring them back."
"Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?"
"They are pierced tonight by many a thorn."

But all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
Will arise a glad cry to the gate of heaven,
"Rejoice: I have all my sheep;"
As the angels echo around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own."

—Helping Hand.

The revised ATONEMENT has a new section on "The Burnt Offering," and a chapter on the "Object of the Judgment." Size, 96 pages. Price, single copy, ten cents; six copies, fifty cents.

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TWO CIRCUMCISIONS.

IN Colossians ii. 11 Paul says: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

From this and other Scriptures it is clear that circumcision, like many other things in the Bible, has two meanings, natural and spiritual. And while many think only of the natural, or think of it as the more real, it is but the shadow, of which the spiritual is the substance. The apostle himself applies this rule to several things which in the letter were in force before the death of Christ, but which are applicable only in spirit since then. The believers in Christ at Colosse were under the influence of certain Judaizing teachers, and to them Paul says: "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [all of which were ceremonies of the Jewish age]; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [the substance] is of Christ."—Vs. 16, 17.

It appears clear that the apostle included under this principle all the ordinances of the Old Testament. He calls them the "rudiments," or primary elements, "of the world," out of which Jesus died, when he was made perfect through sufferings; and therefore those who by faith are "dead with Christ" are not subject to these ordinances.—Ver. 20. The substance having come, the old forms, if obeyed, are no higher than "the commandments and doctrines of men."

Of course, this statement of the apostle does not include the ordinances of the New Testament—those introduced by our Lord himself and practiced by the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Though these too are ceremonies, yet they have their use as expressions of loyalty and as symbols of spiritual things. They were appointed in love and wisdom, and adapted to human need, to lead the mind by object-teaching from the lower to the higher, from the form to what it signifies. But if people are satisfied with the mere ceremony, as if that were the reality, would they not fall under the same condemnation expressed by the apostle concerning the old ordinances?

People are liable to go to extremes—either making too much or too little of forms. The same is true of what people think of the Jews in God's plan. Some regard the Jews, according to the flesh, as the Alpha and the Omega of the coming kingdom of God; and others ignore them entirely, and apply all the promises to them to the Church of Christ. It seems clear that there are natural and spiritual Jews, just as there are natural and spiritual circumcisions—the first in either case being the shadow of the spiritual, of which Paul speaks as *the* Jew and *the* circumcision. See Romans ii. 28, 29: "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

According to this the Christian is the spiritual, and therefore the real, Jew. Seeing this, some ignore the natural Jews and their restoration altogether. But this is not necessary, as both are recognized (as in Romans xi., where the believers and Israel cut off for unbelief, and finally saved, are brought to view), and there are promises of natural and spiritual blessings, adapted to both. The promise of an inheritance to Abraham and his seed had two phases,—natural and spiritual,—even as there are two phases of the seed itself, as represented by Isaac and Christ. The two phases are said to be as the sand of the sea-shore, and as the stars

of heaven. The inheritance of the natural seed is the land of Canaan, and the seal of this phase of the promise is the natural circumcision. But Abraham, seeing beyond the shadow, looked for "a better country, that is, an heavenly," and "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."—Heb. xi. 10, 16. It seems that the seal of the higher phase of the promise must be the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the flesh. It appears to be important to learn to discriminate between the two phases of the seed, of the promise, of the seal, of the inheritance and the kingdom, and not to expect a share in the earthly promises, as many Christians are doing. If earthly hopes tend to earthly life, the heavenly hope will tend to the higher life.

"THE APPLE OF HIS EYE."

"Keep me as the apple of the eye."—Ps. xvii. 8.

"He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye."—Zech. ii. 8.

"He kept them as the apple of His eye."—Deut. xxxii. 10.

Am I Lord, so dear to Thee?
He harms Thee who toucheth me;
Every grief that hurts my heart
Reaches Thee with stinging dart.

Sensitive my eye to pain,
Quiv'ring sore thro' nerve and brain,
But more keen the pain to Thee
When a sorrow toucheth me.

Like the apple of Thine eye!
In Thy love thus let me lie;
What can harm Thy little child,
Though oppressed, abused, reviled?

Let me leap for joy of heart
Over every sting and smart;
Not an ill can come to me
Which has not come first to Thee.

Fill me with this thought of grace
As I gaze on Thy dear face—
This my comfort and my plea,
He harms Thee that harmeth me.—Sel.

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EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER.

Ye Must Be Born Again.

DEAR BRO. PATON:—Enclosed find twenty cents, for which send me a dozen tracts, "Is Christ Our Substitute?" And I also present a little article entitled, "Ye Must Be Born Again."

It has pleased the Lord to at least permit me to be much afflicted in body; but thereby he has opportunity to teach me much concerning his precious word. In these afflictions we are brought nearer to him, and then he can reveal certain truths to us.

I have been led to see that the redemption of our race has been absolutely secured in Christ—not that he has made a plan simply whereby it is possible for us to be saved if we do this or that, as many teach; thus leaving the matter in our own hands to decide whether it would become efficacious or not. If this were so, it would be a certain failure, because man is the failure; but not so with God. He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The redemption through Christ is God's work, and not man's. It is God's way of giving life and immortality to a lost and ruined race, so that the outcome as to life, or salvation, depends, not on the fallen, sinful creature, but on God, the Almighty Creator.

Two weeks ago, I heard a sermon in which the minister stated that it depended on us whether we should be saved or not—that it all hinged on man's will—that God would like to save mankind, but could not on account of man's stubborn will, which completely hindered, and, of course, would frustrate God's power to save the sinner. After going to bed that night, I slept till about two o'clock, when I awoke, and my thoughts were continually on God's word until about six in the morning, and the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus came vividly before me, especially the words, "Ye must be born again." Now the thought

that presented itself was this: Jesus did not say, Nicodemus, it is your privilege to be born again, or if you choose, you may be born again, or if you meet certain conditions you will be born again. Not so. There was the one great word—the thus saith the Lord:—"Ye must be born again." Nothing that Nicodemus, or the rest of the race, whom he represents, (for it is still preached to all sinners that they must be born again), can in any possible way hinder the being born again, when God's due time comes for it.

Of course, he is now calling the first fruits, and preparing them for their place and purpose. They are to share with Christ, so that it can be said: "In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit in thrones." From that time on, the word, "Ye must be born again," will be carried out in the rest of the race, who have missed the high calling or first fruits. But that will still be the Lord's work, and the glorified Church with him. It will be the work of the ages until all are reconciled to God and born again. Praise the Lord for his great redemption for us sinners, through Christ Jesus our Lord, world without end. May the Lord bless this message to someone.—John J. Gettel, Chambersburg, Pa.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

LET each one read from Matthew xvi. 13 to xvii. 9. We regard the teaching here as one of the evidences that the plan of salvation does not end at the second coming of the Lord, or his coming for his saints, but that it will go on afterward until all the nations shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and "They that hear shall live."—John v. 25.

It seems clear that the Transfiguration scene is a representation of the kingdom of Christ and its merciful work after it is established in its glory at his second coming. It is a picture of his appearing in glory; and we are told that when he thus appears, "Then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. iii. 4. As the wife is said to be the glory of the husband, so the Church is the glory of Christ, and for this reason he could not appear in his glory if she were not with him. And it is clearly Scriptural that their appearing with him is preceded by "the coming of the Lord [for his saints] and our gathering together unto him."—2. Thess. ii. 1.

Many do not see the distinction between the Lord's coming *for* his saints and his later coming *with* them. Because of this, they have been led to crowd all the stages of his coming together, as if it were a single event that could take place in a moment; and yet they know that the first advent of Christ covered more than thirty years. It is well to take this fact into account.

In 1. Thess. i. 9, 10, we see the true attitude of the Church in the gospel age—to turn from idols, serve the living and true God, and wait for his Son Jesus from heaven. He said: "I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."—John xiv. 3. Of course, he has been with them, by his indwelling Spirit, all the age; but the apostle shows that the Lord Himself descends, and they are caught up to meet him, and so shall they ever be with him.—1. Thess. iv. 16, 17. Is it not clear that it must be after this gathering together unto him, that "the Lord God shall come, and all his saints with him?"—Psalm l. 5; Zech. xiv. 5; 1. Thess. iii. 13.

As the coming *for* the saints is the coming of the *Son* of God, so the coming *with* his saints is the "manifestation of the *Sons* of God." As they waited for the *Son*, their Bridegroom, so the rest of mankind wait for the *sons*, that they also may be delivered.—Rom. viii. 19–21. This later manifestation

appears to be illustrated in the transfiguration scene.

In this lesson we have a picture of both the saints with Christ in the heavenly phase of the kingdom and the nations still on the earth. The heavenly is the ruling, teaching and blessing power, and the earthly are the subjects to be taught and blessed. The heavenly kingdom is here represented by the glorified three —Christ, Moses and Elias; and the nations are represented by three untransfigured men— Peter, James and John.

Many admit that the first three represented the glorified, but they have no use for the earthly three, as they do not see that the heavenly kingdom is to rule and bless the nations. But as Christ and the saints are to be manifested in glory, there must be others to whom they shall appear; and this truth is illustrated in this lesson.

It has been asked why Jesus, Moses and Elias should represent the heavenly kingdom; or why Moses and Elias should be chosen instead of others for this picture. There are two views that seem worthy of attention. First, Moses being the law-giver, fitly represents God's people of the Jewish dispensation. And it seems clear that Elijah (the old Testament name for Elias) represents the gospel church—the fruit of the gospel dispensation. —See DAY DAWN. Christ is the Center of faith in both dispensations, and the Lord of both. Put with this the fact that in the New Jerusalem the two are blended—the twelve angels at the gates being the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve foundations being the twelve apostles—and it suggests a reason why Moses and Elias, rather than others, should stand with Christ to represent the heavenly kingdom.

The other view is based on the revealed fact that Moses fell asleep in death, and that Elijah was translated. The kingdom to be set up at the Lord's second coming is to be composed of two classes—God's people who had fallen asleep, and those who do not sleep, but are changed in a moment, and pass over into the heavenly state, to be with Christ. Moses seems to be the representative of those raised from such sleep, and Elias of those changed without sleep. These things are evidence that the Transfiguration scene is a foregleam of what is not due until after the coming of the Lord for his saints, whether asleep or awake.

This location of the transfiguration scene as a picture of what is due after the second coming is sustained by the context. In verse 27, of the preceding chapter, the coming in glory and the reward are mentioned. And in verse 28, the Lord made the emphatic promise that some of them should be witnesses of that very thing: "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they *see* the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Then the next verse (xvii. 1) says, "And after *six days*," Jesus took Peter, James and John, and shewed them just what he had said *some* of them should *see*,—"the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Some object to the idea that the transfiguration scene was given in fulfillment of Christ's promise, and have claimed that Christ *actually* came "in his glory," "in his kingdom," before some of the disciples died. But we are sure that the whole tenor of prophecy locates the coming of Christ, the resurrection, and the establishment of his kingdom at the seventh trumpet, or at the end of the gospel dispensation. And it is worthy of note, that Peter, one of the three witnesses, assures us that the scene on the holy mount *was* a fulfillment of the promise of Christ.—See 2. Pet. i. 16–18. Christ had said they should *see* the glory of Christ coming in his kingdom. Here Peter says: "We were *eye witnesses* of his majesty," that is, of his glory, of his kingdom. Then he refers directly to what was said and done on the mount of transfiguration.

This satisfies us. It was important to portray beforehand the glorious kingdom and its work. And so he chose the three to represent the nations—three who will doubtless be with Christ in the *heavenly* phase of the kingdom, when he *actually* comes in his glory, as he came then in figure. And the force of the figure is not weakened by the time when he thus appeared:—"After six days." Seven is made prominent in the Bible. Six days of work, then rest! Six days of waiting, then the reward, the glory! Six days Moses waited in the cloud, then the glory appeared! Six thousand years of earthly experience, then the kingdom of Christ!

Christ was "transfigured." Trans means across or over. To be transfigured, is to be *carried over in a figure.* This shows the truth of our position. It was a figure of the kingdom to come. This is why it is called a vision.—Verse 9.

In order to see the value of this lesson in its bearing on the future proclamation of the gospel, let us put ourselves, in thought, in the position of the *nations*, after the saints are with Christ. The three apostles, not transfigured, now represent them. They begin to realize a little of the truth of Christ's presence as king. A voice from the cloud speaks to them, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."—Verse 5. Who are to hear him? Let us remember our standpoint. We are in the position of the nations after the kingdom has come. It is the voice of the heavenly kingdom to the kingdoms of earth. "The *nations* shall hear and be confounded." And, blessed be God, they shall also hear and live. This is one of the passages that usually has been misapplied, for want of knowing the plan of the ages. It has always been well to hear the voice of Christ, but this passage shows that this work of proclaiming Christ as King has special application in the future. And if this one thing could be clearly seen by Christians generally, it would be a key to many Scriptures and a source of great joy to many sad hearts. Hope for mankind does not end with the second coming of Christ.

Another point, the three disciples were afraid.—Verse 6. Under the ordinary teaching concerning the coming of Christ, would not the nations very naturally be afraid when they began to realize that the Judge had come? But what a blessed word from the Judge himself to these stricken ones: "Arise, and be not afraid."—Verse 7. People have usually been taught to think of the coming Judge and the judgment with fear and dread. Oh! that all might realize now, what the nations will then learn, that our Judge is not our Enemy, but our best Friend—the sympathizing One. He is appointed Judge because he is the Son of Man. The Psalmist gives a view of the judgment of the world, entirely different from the popular one.—See Ps. xcvi. and xcviii. He calls upon everything and everybody to rejoice and be glad that the Lord is coming to judge the world. This surely is in keeping with our application of these few words of Christ, as King and Judge, to the nations of the earth, "Arise, and be not afraid."

What a joyous thing it is and will be to proclaim this message of judgment, this everlasting gospel, to mankind! And how blessed it is to see each new evidence of the truth of this blessed hope—that mankind are not on the way to endless ruin, but under the guidance of an all-wise Father, and the discipline of a loving Judge, are approaching a glorious destiny. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead [all the dead] shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." God forbid that we should seek to weaken or limit this grand promise! May we all rejoice in its fullness and universality!

WAITING ON GOD.

Waiting on God? It is sitting down
By the way to rest awhile,
And learning the secret of perfect peace,
In the light of a Father's smile.

It is ceasing to look with anxious eye
On the trials of coming days;
It is leaving the present to God alone,
With a heart overfull of praise.

It is never a thought of "How" or "Why?"
In the matter of daily life;
It is simply letting him take his way
Through the midst of all care and strife.

It is leaving everything in his hands,
To do as he seeth best,
Assured that he never can make mistakes;
This, this is the perfect rest.—Selected.

CHRIST AND THE LITTLE ONES.

"The Master has come over Jordan,"
Said Hannah, the mother, one day;
"He is healing the people who throng him,
With a touch of his finger, they say;
And now I shall carry the children,
Little Rachel and Samuel and John;
I shall carry the baby, Esther,
For the Lord to look upon."

The father looked at her kindly,
But he shook his head and smiled;
"Now, who but a doting mother
Could think of a thing so wild?
If the children were tortured by demons,
Or dying of fever, 'twere well;
Or had they the taint of the leper,
Like many in Israel."

"Nay, do not hinder me, Nathan;
I feel such a burden of care;
If I carry it to the Master,
Perhaps I shall leave it there.
If he lay his hands on the children,
My heart will be lighter, I know;
For a blessing for ever and ever
Will follow them as they go."

So, over the hills of Judah,
Along by the vine-rows green,
With Esther asleep on her bosom,
And Rachel her brothers between;
'Mong the people who hang on his teaching,
Or waited his touch and his word,
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening,
She pressed to the feet of the Lord.

"Now, why shouldst thou hinder the Master,"
Said Peter, "with children like these?
Seest not how, from morning till evening,
He teacheth and healeth disease?"
Then Christ said: "Forbid not the children,
Permit them to come unto me!"
And he took in his arms little Esther,
And Rachel he set on his knee;

And the heavy heart of the mother
Was lifted all earth-care above,
As he laid his hands on the brothers
And blest them with tenderest love;
As he said of the babes in his bosom,
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven,"
And strength for all duty and trial
That hour to her spirit was given.—Sel.

WILL all who want the HOPE continued to their address, please let me hear from them at once? This means all paying subscribers and free readers whose term of subscription has ended, or will end with the next quarter.

HEROES AND HEROES.

We give unstinted praise to the man
Who is brave enough to die;
But the man who struggles unflinchingly,
Against the currents of destiny
And bears the storm of adversity
We pass unnoticed by.

We've plaudits and tears for him who falls
Borne down in the shock of strife,
But a word of cheer we neglect to say
To him who plods on his dreary way
And fights in silence from day to day,
The unseen battles of life.

There's courage, I grant required to face
Grim death on the gory field,
There's also courage required to meet
Life's burden and sorrow; to brave defeat,
To strive with evil and not retreat
To suffer and not to yield.

Some moments are there in every life
When the spirit longs for rest;
When the heart is filled with a bleak despair.
When the weight of trouble, remorse and care
Seems really greater than we can bear,
And death were a welcome guest.

But we crush it down and we go our way
To the duties that lie in wait,
From day to day we renew the fight,
To resist the wrong and to seek the right,
To climb at last to the sun-crowned height
And to climb o'er time and fate.

And thus—for my heart goes out to them—
My meed of praise I would give,
To those who struggle life's path along
The host of toil, the patient, strong,
The unrewarded, unnumbered throng,
Who are brave enough to live.—Selection by Ermina Stray. Recited at the Larger Hope Convention.

Please look at your credit and see if it is in the past. If you still want the HOPE, please let me know as soon as possible. And if you do not want it, please drop me a card.—EDITOR.

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